AVATAR

The Last Airbender

BOOK ONE: WATER
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: "The Waterbending Master"

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ACT ONE

EXT. ARCTIC OCEAN - DAY

Appa, clearly tired, flies a few feet above the water, skimming its surface with his feet. Aang is slumped on Appa's head. Katara and Sokka (wearing winter coats) lean against the sides of the saddle, watching the icebergs pass. There is no land in sight.

APPA
(TIRED GROAN)

SOKKA
I'm not one to complain, but can't Appa fly any higher?

AANG
(irritable)
I have an idea. Why don't we all get on your back and you can fly us to the North Pole?

SOKKA
I'd love to. Climb on, everyone! Sokka's ready for takeoff.

Sokka stands up and bends forward, as if to give someone a piggyback ride. Momo eagerly jumps on his back.

KATARA
Look, we're all just a little tired and cranky because we've been flying for two days straight.

SOKKA
And for what? We can't even find the Northern Water Tribe. There's nothing up here.

A somber mood settles over the group.

The kids hear a RUMBLE. Then, a large, sharp chunk of ice violently shoots up out of the water in front of Appa. Aang pulls the reigns.

AANG
(SURPRISED SCREAM)

Appa banks to the right, barely missing the ice chunk. Katara and Sokka slam into the side of the saddle.

Another ice chunk shoots out of the water and Appa banks the other way. Appa's foot clips the ice, sending him into a out-of-control spin. He CRASHES into the water.

AANG/KATARA/SOKKA
(SCREAMS)

13 Two boats surround Appa. The kids crouch down in Appa's 13
saddle for safety. Katara sees the men in the boats use Waterbending to freeze the water around Appa, trapping him.

KATARA
They're Waterbenders! We found the Water Tribe!

Katara stands up in the saddle and waves her arms over her head. Seeing Katara, one of the Waterbenders gestures for the others to stop.

EXT. ESTABLISHING - FIRE NATION ENCAMPMENT - DAY

Several warships are docked at a northern Earth Kingdom port. Tents line the area (similar to 103.) A light dusting of snow covers the ground.

INT. ADMIRAL ZHAO'S TENT - CONTINUOUS

Admiral Zhao paces in front of the world map. Six high-ranking officers (captains and generals) sit facing him, including the gung-ho CAPTAIN LI and the skeptical GENERAL HONG. Zhao's assistant takes notes.

ADMIRAL ZHAO
He’s heading North. The Northern Water Tribe.

Zhao points to the tribe on the map.

ADMIRAL ZHAO (CONT’D)
The Avatar needs to master Waterbending. He’s looking for a teacher.

CAPTAIN LI
Then what are we waiting for? Let’s go get him.

ADMIRAL ZHAO
Patience, Captain Li. This isn’t some little Earth village we can just march into. The Water Tribe is a great nation. There’s a reason they’ve survived a hundred years of war. The frozen tundra is treacherous -- the landscape itself is an icy fortress.
(beat)
We’ll need a massive invasion force.

EXT. NORTHERN WATER TRIBE - DAY

Appa swims through the foggy waters, flanked by the boats. The kids are still in Appa’s saddle.

AANG
There it is!

Out of the mist, the NORTHERN WATER TRIBE is revealed. It is a giant ice city, several miles wide. Its architecture looks like a cross between an ancient Mayan city and the watery canals of Venice. Looming over the city are giant ICE CLIFFS from which the city was originally built. (STORYBOARD NOTE: The following sequence should visually pay off what the kids have been waiting to see all season.)

KATARA
(in awe)
The Northern Water Tribe.

SOKKA
We’re finally here!

The kids all smile.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NORTHERN WATER TRIBE - CITY ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Appa and the boats gain entrance into the fortified city through an impressive water lock system controlled by Waterbenders (think Panama Canal.) Appa enters the lock; Waterbenders close the ice gates and divert water to fill the lock, raising Appa and the boats to a higher level; the Waterbenders open another set of gates; and Appa floats into the canal. (STORYBOARD NOTE: This should be very short -- don’t show all of this literally.)

KATARA
I can’t believe how many Waterbenders live up here.

AANG
Yeah, we’ll find a master to teach us no problem.

EXT. NORTHERN WATER TRIBE - CANALS - CONTINUOUS

Appa floats through the city behind the boats as the kids take an amazing visual tour through the city. The canals are a series of interconnected waterways that spiral through the city.

Curious ONLOOKERS watch as the kids float by, sitting in Appa’s saddle. Aang happily waves to them. Momo jumps up and down excitedly.

Aang and Katara see a group of little kids making a simple snowman. Next to them, some Waterbender kids make a much bigger SNOW CREATURE. The Waterbenders make the snow creature move and it crushes the snowman.

AANG/KATARA
(LAUGH)

Sokka looks down and sees a GONDOLA-STYLE BOAT powered by a Waterbender pass by. In the front of the boat sits a beautiful, YOUNG GIRL dressed in an ornate robe. Sokka is love-struck.

KATARA (O.S.)
This place is beautiful.

SOKKA
(still looking at girl)
Yes she is.

EXT. ZUKO’S SHIP - AT DOCK - EVENING

It’s music night on the ship. Uncle and the crew (minus Zuko) sit on deck, playing various instruments -- drums, tsungi horn, and Chinese guitar. The cook and the engineer do a funny dance together. Uncle sings a traditional folk song.

UNCLE
(singing)
Winter...Spring...Summer...Fall/ Four seasons/ Four loves/ Four seasons/ For love.
(continue humming melody)

As the song continues, a group of men walks up the ramp to board the ship. Admiral Zhao walks onto the deck. The music and dancing stops abruptly. (NOTE: Over a shot of Zhao, we hear the tsungi horn go flat. HOOONK!)

EXT. NORTHERN WATER TRIBE - MOONLIGHT PICNIC - NIGHT

A crescent moon hangs in the sky. TRIBAL DRUMMING rings out as the tribe gathers for the feast. ANIMAL SKINS line the ground and act as the “tables” for the feast. TORCHES line the picnic area. The entire area is decorated in a very ceremonial fashion -- this is not an everyday event.

Aang, Sokka, Katara, and Momo sit at the head table with CHIEF ARNOOK, his wife, and the Chieftains. Chief Arnook, a 50 year old warrior type, stands and addresses the tribe.

CHIEF ARNOOK
Tonight, we celebrate the arrival of our brother and sister from the Southern Tribe. And they have brought with them someone very special, someone who many of us believed disappeared from the world until now -- the Avatar!

CROWD
(CHEERS AND SURPRISED BUZZ)

Aang waves and makes an awkward bow. The crowd CLAPS.

CHIEF ARNOOK
We also celebrate my daughter’s sixteenth birthday. Princess Yue is now of marrying age.

Everyone CLAPS again as PRINCESS YUE enters the picnic area in ceremonial fashion, accompanied by her maids, two adult women. Sokka immediately recognizes her as the young girl he saw in the boat earlier. Princess Yue is very demure and mannered in her actions and words. Sokka continues to gaze at her, love-struck.

PRINCESS YUE
(to everyone)
Thank you, father. May the great ocean and moon spirits watch over us during these troubled times.

CHIEF ARNOOK
Now... Master Pakku and his students will perform!

Everyone claps and CHEERS. As the drumming resumes, MASTER PAKKU, (a lean, tough man in his 60s) and three other Waterbenders take the stage in front of the canal. They perform a choreographed WATERBENDING ROUTINE -- a visually poetic and powerful display of Waterbending. (For example, the Waterbenders draw up the water in rapid, staccato movement in rhythm with the drumming.) Katara and Aang watch with big smiles on their faces.

As the performance continues, Princess Yue sits down at the table, right next to Sokka. Sokka leans over to the Princess and turns on the ‘charm.’

SOKKA
Hi there. Sokka, Southern Water Tribe.

PRINCESS YUE
Very nice to meet you.

Silence.

SOKKA
So, uh... you're a princess, huh? You know, back in my tribe, I'm kind of like a prince myself.

KATARA
(LAUGHING) Prince of what?

SOKKA
A lot of things! Do you mind? I'm trying to have a conversation here.

KATARA
(bowing)
My apologies, Prince Sokka.

Princess Yue stifles a laugh. As soon as Sokka turns back to her, she regains her composure.

SOKKA
So it looks like I'm going to be in town for a while -- I'm thinkin'... maybe we could... do an activity together?

Princess Yue looks at him a bit baffled.

PRINCESS YUE
(bemused)
"Do an activity?"

Just then, the performance and drumming ends -- Princess Yue quickly turns her attention away from Sokka to the performers and CLAPS along with the crowd. Sokka looks back at Katara who's been watching him attempt to flirt with the princess.

KATARA
Very smooth.

Sokka looks bummed out.

NEAR THE STAGE: Chief Arnook introduces Aang to Master Pakku. Pakku seems unimpressed that Aang is the Avatar.

CHIEF ARNOOK
Master Pakku, meet your newest student- the Avatar.

Aang bows.

MASTER PAKKU
Just because you’re destined to save the world, don’t expect any special treatment.

AANG
My friend and I can’t wait to start training with you -- after we relax for a couple days.

MASTER PAKKU
If you want to relax, then I suggest visiting a tropical island.
(MORE)

MASTER PAKKU(CONT'D)

If not, I'll see you both at sunrise.
Good night.

Master Pakku exits. Aang casts a worried look at Chief Arnook, who smiles.

INT. ZUKO'S SHIP - ZUKO'S ROOM - NIGHT

Zuko sits alone in his room, staring at the wall, brooding. There is a knock at the door and Uncle pokes his head in.

ZUKO
For the last time, I'm not playing the tsungi horn.

UNCLE
No, it's about our plans -- there's a bit of a problem.

Just then, Zhao pushes past Uncle and enters Zuko's room. Zuko immediately gets up and takes a defensive posture.

ADMIRAL ZHAO
I'm taking your crew.

ZUKO
What?!

ADMIRAL ZHAO
I've recruited them for a little expedition to the North Pole.

ZUKO
Uncle, is that true?

UNCLE
I'm afraid so. He's taking everyone.
(sadly)
Even the cook.

ADMIRAL ZHAO
Sorry you won't be there to watch me capture the Avatar, but I can't have you getting in my way again.

ZUKO
(LUNGING GROWL)

UNCLE
No!

Zuko lunges at Zhao with a burst of flames, but Uncle holds him back. Zhao doesn't flinch.

70 Zhao looks around Zuko's cramped quarters. Something catches 70
his eye -- two broadswords hang on Zuko's wall. Zhao has a FLASHBACK to the Blue Spirit stealing the Avatar from him, brandishing the same two broadswords. Zhao doesn't lose his cool.

ADMIRAL ZHAO
I didn't know you were skilled with broadswords, Prince Zuko.

ZUKO
(covering)
I'm not. They're antiques. Just decorative...

Zhao takes one of the swords off the wall and looks down its blade.

ADMIRAL ZHAO
Have you heard of the Blue Spirit, General Iroh?

UNCLE
Just rumors. I don't think he's real.

(NOTE: Uncle does not suspect that Zuko is the Blue Spirit.) Zhao stares right at Zuko.

ADMIRAL ZHAO
He's real alright. He's a criminal and an enemy of the Fire Nation. But I have a feeling justice will catch up with him soon.

Zhao hands the sword to Uncle.

ADMIRAL ZHAO (CONT'D)
General Iroh, the offer to join my mission still stands, if you change your mind.

Zhao exits.

EXT. NORTHERN WATER TRIBE - TRAINING FIELD - SUNRISE

Aang and Katara walk down the path toward Master Pakku's training field.

KATARA
(excited)
I've waited for this day my whole life -- I finally get to learn from a real Waterbending master!

They arrive at the training field. Master Pakku is doing a slow, meditative Waterbending form -- a floating sphere of water reacts elegantly in response to his moves. Aang interrupts him.

AANG
Good morning, Master Pakku!

The sphere of water drops and splashes everywhere.

MASTER PAKKU
No, please. March right in. I'm not concentrating or anything.

AANG
Uh, this is my friend, Katara. The one I told you about?

Katara bows, respectfully.

MASTER PAKKU
I'm sorry. I think there's been a misunderstanding. You didn't tell my your friend was a girl. In our tribe, it's forbidden for women to learn Waterbending.

Off Katara's shocked reaction.

FADE OUT:

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. NORTHERN WATER TRIBE - TRAINING FIELD - MORNING

Katara and Aang are still with Master Pakku. Katara is furious.

KATARA
What do you mean you won't teach me? I didn't travel across the entire world so you could tell me no!

Long beat.

MASTER PAKKU
No.

KATARA
But there must be other female Waterbenders in your tribe?

MASTER PAKKU
Here, the women learn from Yagoda to use their Waterbending to heal. I'm sure she would be happy to take you as her student, despite your bad attitude.

KATARA
I don't want to heal, I want to fight!

MASTER PAKKU
I can see that. But our tribe has customs... rules.

KATARA
Well your "rules" stink.

AANG
Yeah! They're not fair. If you won't teach Katara then...

MASTER PAKKU
Then what?

AANG
Then I won't learn from you.

MASTER PAKKU
Well, have fun teaching yourself. I'm sure you'll do a great job.

Pakku walks away. Katara stops him.

KATARA
Wait! Aang didn't mean that.
(sotto to Aang)
You can't risk your training for me. You have to learn from master Pakku. Even if he is a big jerk.

Aang nods. Katara exits.

MASTER PAKKU
Why don't we get started, then.

EXT. NORTHERN WATER TRIBE - CANALS - MORNING

Sokka walks over a bridge on his way to warrior training (he carries a pack of supplies, weapons, etc.) In the canal below, he sees Princess Yue float by in a Waterbending gondola.

SOKKA
Princess Yue! Good morning!

Sokka waves to her. Princess Yue waves back. The boat disappears underneath the bridge. Sokka runs along the bank, chasing after the boat. He finally catches up to it, out of breath. Sokka walks along the bank, keeping pace with the boat.

SOKKA (CONT'D)
Hey, how about that picnic last night? Boy, your dad sure knows how to throw a party.

PRINCESS YUE
I'm happy you enjoyed yourself.

SOKKA
Well, it wasn't as much fun after you left.

Princess Yue smiles and blushes.

SOKKA (CONT'D)
So, I'm still hoping we can see more of each other.

PRINCESS YUE
(smiling)
Do an activity, you mean?

SOKKA
(still nervous)
Yes! At a place... for some time.

PRINCESS YUE
I'd love to.
(pointing at bridge)
I'll meet you on that bridge tonight.

SOKKA
Great! I'll see you -- (TRIPPING AND FALLING NOISE)

Sokka trips over an embankment and flips head over heels.

PRINCESS YUE
(LAUGHS THEN COVERS MOUTH) Sorry.

SOKKA
That's okay.
(dreamily)
It was worth it.

Princess Yue smiles and her boat floats away. Sokka flops backward in the snow, and looks up at the sky, a huge grin on his face.

SOKKA (CONT'D)
(dreamily, to himself)
(SIGHS) See you tonight.

INT. ADMIRAL ZHAO'S TENT - DAY

Zhao sits at his desk, speaking to someone off-screen.

ADMIRAL ZHAO
I'm very impressed. You all seem highly qualified for the mission I have in mind.

Reveal that Zhao is speaking with the PIRATES, from 109. Zhao pushes a chest full of gold toward them. Pirate Barker Oh takes one of the gold coins and bites it.

PIRATE BARKER OH
That's some tasty gold.

PIRATE CAPTAIN
What do you need us to do?

ADMIRAL ZHAO
I believe you're acquainted with Prince Zuko?

EXT. NORTHERN WATER TRIBE - HEALING HUTS - DAY

Katara approaches the grouping of ice huts.

INT. YAGODA'S HEALING HUT - CONTINUOUS

Katara enters one of the huts. A friendly old woman, YAGODA, and her young, female students are assembled for a healing lesson.

KATARA
Uh, hi. Are you Yagoda?

YAGODA
Are you here for the healing lesson?

KATARA
(resigned)
I guess I am.

YAGODA
Welcome, welcome.

Katara sits down with the rest of the students.

EXT. TRAINING FIELD - DAY

Master Pakku boils his lunch in an iron pot, stirring it using Waterbending. He watches Aang draw some water from the canal and perform Waterbending moves. Like in 109, Aang does several flourishes and tricky moves.

MASTER PAKKU
You're moving the water around, but you're not feeling the push and pull.

AANG
(frustrated)
I'm trying...

Master Pakku SLURPS up some of the stew. Aang shoots him an annoyed look and drops the water.

MASTER PAKKU
Maybe that move is too advanced for you. Why don't you try an easier one.

He goes back to eating. Aang's face is red with anger.

INT. YAGODA'S HEALING HUT - DAY

The class is over and the students exit the hut. Katara approaches Yagoda.

KATARA
Thanks for the lesson.

YAGODA
So... who's the lucky boy?

KATARA
Huh?

YAGODA
(pointing)
Your betrothal necklace. You're getting married, right?

KATARA
(LAUGHING) No, I don't think I'm ready for that yet. My grandmother gave my mother this necklace -- and my mother passed it down to me.

Yagoda leans in very close and looks at the carving on the necklace.

YAGODA
(GASP) I recognize this carving!

Then she looks at Katara's face -- they're practically nose to nose.

YAGODA (CONT'D)
I don't know why I didn't realize sooner. You're the spitting image of Kanna!

KATARA
(freaked out)
Wait. How do you know my Gran Gran's name?

YAGODA
When I was about your age, I was friends with Kanna. She was born here, in the Northern Tribe.

A beat as Katara takes this in.

KATARA
She never told me.

YAGODA
Your grandmother had an arranged marriage with a young Waterbender. He carved that necklace for her.

KATARA
If Gran Gran was engaged, why did she leave?

YAGODA
I don't know -- that's always been a mystery to me. She left without saying goodbye.

Katara touches her necklace, pondering this mystery.

EXT. SHORELINE - NIGHT

UNCLE
(calling out)
Good luck!

Zuko's ship is still docked. Zuko stands on deck, staring out to sea. Uncle approaches.

UNCLE (CONT'D)
The crew wanted me to wish you safe travels.

ZUKO
Good riddance to those traitors.

UNCLE
It's a lovely night for a walk. Why don't you join me? It would clear your head.

A long beat. Zuko doesn't respond.

UNCLE (CONT'D)
Or just stay in your room and sit in the dark. Whatever makes you happy.

Uncle walks off the ship, humming the tune from music night.

UNCLE (CONT'D)
(HUMMING)

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ZUKO'S SHIP - LATER

IN ZUKO'S ROOM: Zuko sits in his room in the dark, meditating.

ON DECK: The pirates sneak aboard. They throw hooks off the deck. Below, a couple of the other pirates attach red barrels to the hooks. The pirates hoist the barrels onto the deck. One of the barrels almost falls over.

PIRATE BARKER OH
(whispering)
Careful with the blasting jelly!

IN ZUKO'S ROOM: Zuko's meditation is interrupted when he hears a noise. He opens the door.

ZUKO
Uncle? Uncle, is that you?

No answer. Zuko exits his room cautiously, hugging the walls. He rounds a corner, and takes a Firebending stance. No one's there.

ON DECK: The pirates put the barrels in place at the base of the tower, then scurry off the ship. A fuse burns toward the barrels...

ON THE BRIDGE: Zuko enters. It's empty. Zuko drops his guard and rubs his head -- must be hearing things. Then...

BOOM!! A huge explosion erupts, rocking the ship. A fireball races up the inside of the ship's tower, toward Zuko. At the last moment, Zuko makes a PROTECTIVE FIRE SHIELD around his body. The fireball hits Zuko's fire shield and the force of the blast knocks Zuko out the window.

EXT. PATH - THE SAME TIME

Uncle sees the fire in the distance and rushes back to the ship, fearing Zuko is in trouble.

UNCLE
Zuko!

EXT. SHORELINE - CONTINUOUS

The ship sinks into the ocean, continuing to spew smoke and fire. Uncle rushes up, distraught, looking at the water. Zuko is nowhere in sight.

UNCLE
Zuko...

EXT. NORTHERN WATER TRIBE - CANALS - NIGHT

Princess Yue stands on the bridge. Sokka checks his reflection in the water and slicks his hair back -- lookin' good. He walks up to her.

SOKKA
Hi, Princess Yue.

She doesn't respond -- she looks far away into the distance.

SOKKA (CONT'D)
I made you something.

He hands her a small figurine carved out of bone. (Note: the princess remains distant throughout the scene, not making eye contact, etc., though Sokka is oblivious.)

SOKKA (CONT'D)
I carved it myself.

PRINCESS YUE
It's a bear.

SOKKA
Actually, it's supposed to be a fish. See, it has a fin.

PRINCESS YUE
Oh.

She hands the figurine back to him.

PRINCESS YUE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry... I made a mistake.
(upset)
I shouldn't have asked you to come here!

165 She runs off, leaving Sokka alone and confused. He angrily 165
chucks the figurine off the bridge.

INT. GUEST HUT - CONTINUOUS

Katara unrolls her sleeping bag. Aang makes little wind balls and throws them at Momo. Momo pounces on the balls, but when he opens his paws, there's nothing there. Sokka enters, carrying his warrior's bag.

KATARA
How's warrior training going?

Sokka throws down his bag, kicks it, and collapses in a heap on the floor.

SOKKA
(EFFORT SOUND)

AANG
That bad?

SOKKA
No, it’s Princess Yue. I don’t get it. One minute she wants to go out with me -- and the next, she’s telling me to get lost.
(beat)
So how’s Waterbending training?

Katara is silent.

AANG
Master poop-head won’t teach her because she’s a girl.

SOKKA
(the answer is obvious)
Why don’t you just teach her, Aang.

Katara perks up.

KATARA
Why didn’t I think of that?
(to Aang)
At night, you can teach me whatever moves you learn from master Pakku. That way, you have someone to practice with and I get to learn Waterbending. Everyone’s happy!

SOKKA
I’m not happy.

KATARA
But you’re never happy. Come on, Aang.

Katara and Aang exit the hut, smiles on their faces.

EXT. NORTHERN WATER TRIBE - CANALS - LATER

Aang draws up some water from the canal and demonstrates a difficult Waterbending move.

AANG
Master Pakku said this move is all about sinking and floating.

Katara tries the same move and performs it successfully.

KATARA
I got it! Wait, let me try again.

Katara pulls up the water again, holding it in front of her. Suddenly, the water swishes away in a spectacular move.

AANG
That was amazing!

KATARA
(confused)
That wasn’t me.

They turn to see master Pakku holding the water. He freezes it into sharp spikes and throws them into the ground like swords.

AANG
(caught)
I was just showing Katara a few moves.

MASTER PAKKU
You have disrespected me, my teachings, and my entire culture.

AANG
I’m sorry, I --

MASTER PAKKU
You are no longer welcome as my student.

Off Katara and Aang’s stunned reactions.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. CHIEF'S TEMPLE - DAY

Everyone has assembled in Chief Arnook's meeting chamber. Chief Arnook, his Chieftains, Master Pakku, and Princess Yue sit on a raised platform area. Katara, Aang, and Sokka stand below. Katara pleads Aang's case to the chief.

CHIEF ARNOOK
What do you want me to do? Force master Pakku to take Aang back as his student.

KATARA
Yes. Please.

As Chief Arnook confers with his chieftains privately, Sokka and the princess make eye contact. Sokka smiles at her, but she turns away. Sokka looks disappointed. Chief Arnook turns back to Katara.

CHIEF ARNOOK
I suspect he might change his mind if you swallow your pride and apologize to him.

Katara looks over at Aang -- she's doing this for him.

KATARA
Fine.

She turns to master Pakku who smiles smugly.

MASTER PAKKU
I'm waiting, little girl.

This puts Katara over the edge -- she's had enough.

KATARA
No. No way am I apologizing to a sour old man like you!

AANG
(trying to stop her)
Uh, Katara...

KATARA
(challenging him to fight)
I'll be outside if you're man enough to fight me!

The chief and his chieftains are visibly shocked by this. Katara storms out. Princess Yue GASPS.

AANG
(to master Pakku, smiling)
I'm sure she didn't mean that.

SOKKA
(to Aang)
Yeah, I think she did.

INT. ADMIRAL ZHAO'S TENT - DAY

Uncle Iroh sits with Admiral Zhao, sipping tea.

ADMIRAL ZHAO
I'm devastated to hear about Prince Zuko. Just devastated.

UNCLE
The Fire Lord will not be pleased when he learns who was responsible.

Zhao looks nervous.

ADMIRAL ZHAO
You know who was behind the attack?

UNCLE
Yes.
(beat)
Pirates! We had a run in with them a while back. They wanted revenge.

Zhao smiles, and drinks his tea -- he's off the hook.

ADMIRAL ZHAO
So, have you reconsidered my offer?

UNCLE
Yes, I accept. It will be an honor to serve as your general.
(raising his cup)
To the Fire Nation!

ADMIRAL ZHAO
(raising his cup)
To victory!

They toast. Uncle looks out through the door of the tent toward the harbor. He sees a squad of Firebenders march onto one of the ships.

EXT. NORTHERN WATER TRIBE - CHIEF'S TEMPLE - DAY

On the walkway, Aang and Sokka catch up to Katara, who is still fuming... she's angry and irrational.

SOKKA
Are you crazy, Katara? You're not going to win this fight.

KATARA
I know. I don't care.

AANG
You don't have to do this for me. I can find another teacher.

KATARA
I'm not doing it for you. Someone needs to slap some sense into that guy!

By now, word of Katara's challenge has spread and curious onlookers gather, including Yagoda.

Master Pakku walks down the temple steps.

KATARA (CONT'D)
So, you decided to show up?

Master Pakku walks right past her -- he's not going to stoop to her level.

KATARA (CONT'D)
Aren't you gonna fight?

MASTER PAKKU
Go back to the healing huts with the other women, where you belong.

The comment is too much for Katara to bear. She lashes out with the water whip, smacking the master in the back of the head! He recovers, calmly -- only his pride bruised.

MASTER PAKKU (CONT'D)
Fine. You want to learn to fight so bad? Study closely!

Pakku turns quickly, sending a fissure of ice at Katara. She dives out of the way. Pakku unleashes a torrent of Waterbending, using the water from the streams on either side of the walkway and the ice on the ground. (STORYBOARD NOTE: Throughout the fight, Pakku is in complete control at all times. When he attacks Katara, he's not really hitting or harming her, but boxing her in, redirecting her strikes etc.)

MASTER PAKKU (CONT'D)
Don't worry, I'm not going to hurt you.

Katara recovers and strikes back, fighting with rage and anger. In Katara's heightened emotional state, she is able to perform more powerful moves than usual. She draws up the water on either side of the walkway in a series of sharp, stinging attacks. Pakku deflects them as he backs toward the bridge. Katara does another move, this time PULLING DOWN the ice statues at the entrance of the walkway. The statues fall toward Pakku. Pakku is taken by surprise, but quickly SINKS HIS BODY DOWN and turns the statues into a wave of water which he sends towards Katara. Katara SINKS HER FEET into the ice to help maintain her balance as the wave washes past her. She looks at Pakku with newfound determination and keeps walking toward him.

KATARA
(defiant)
You can't knock me down!

IN THE CROWD: Aang and Sokka cheer on Katara.

AANG
Go, Katara!

The healing girls and women all look very impressed.

ON THE BRIDGE: Katara and Pakku draw up the water from the canal to fuel their attacks. Katara CHARGES at at Pakku, as she draws up a stream of water behind her. Pakku kicks up a RAMP OF ICE in front of Katara. She runs up it, but then slips and falls and slides back down, dropping the water.

Furious, Katara gets up and draws up water on either side of the canal, forming an ICE TUNNEL around the bridge.

Master Pakku counters by MELTING THE ICE beneath Katara's feet. Katara falls through the hole, but catches onto the ice at the last second. She grits her teeth, then draws up more water from below. The water knocks her back up through the hole.

FROM OUTSIDE: The crowd sees Pakku and Katara get shot out of the ice tunnel in a wave of water, onto the other side of the canal.

Katara and Pakku get to their feet. Above them looms the ICE CLIFFS.

MASTER PAKKU
Well, I'm impressed. You are an excellent Waterbender.

KATARA
But you still won't teach me, will you?

MASTER PAKKU
No.

Katara unleashes strike after strike. She causes fissures to shoot through the ground and up the cliff walls. A GIANT CHUNK OF ICE breaks free from the cliff and slides down above Master Pakku's head. He looks up, surprised. He performs a Waterbending move that turns the huge chunk of ice into snow.

As the snow lightens, the crowd sees that Katara is immobilized in a triangular cage made of ice spears (think: "House of Flying Daggers.) Katara can't move her arms or legs to do Waterbending.

MASTER PAKKU (CONT'D)
This fight is over.

Pakku walks away.

KATARA
(STRUGGLING NOISES) Come back here! I'm not finished yet.

MASTER PAKKU
Yes, you are.

As Pakku walks toward the bridge he notices something on the ground -- Katara's necklace is partially buried in the snow, having fallen off during the fight. He kneels down and picks it up, staring at it like it was a photograph of a loved one.

MASTER PAKKU (CONT'D)
This is my necklace.

KATARA
No it's not, it's mine. Give it back!

MASTER PAKKU
I made this sixty years ago for the love of my life -- for Kanna.

A beat. This is the softest we've ever seen Pakku.

KATARA
My Gran Gran was supposed to marry <u>you</u>?

INT. ZHAO'S SHIP - DAY

Uncle Iroh stands with a masked Firebender in the hallway.

UNCLE
Our plan is working perfectly. Zhao doesn't suspect a thing.

The Firebender takes off his helmet revealing it's Zuko -- he's alive!

ZUKO
You didn't have to do this.

UNCLE
No nephew of mine is going to stowaway on a ship without some backup.

ZUKO
Thank you, Uncle.

They hear footsteps coming down the hallway. Zuko puts his helmet back on.

UNCLE
Someone's coming. Stay hidden until we get to the North Pole and the Avatar will be yours. Good luck.

Uncle and Zuko head off in opposite directions.

EXT. NORTHERN WATER TRIBE - CHIEF'S TEMPLE - DAY

Most of the crowd has dispersed. Katara is now free of the ice. Aang, Sokka, Yagoda, Princess Yue, and Chief Arnook listen to Pakku tell his story of heartbreak.

MASTER PAKKU
(to Katara)
I carved this necklace for your grandmother when we got engaged. I thought we would have a long, happy life together. I loved her.

KATARA
But she didn't love you, did she? It was an arranged marriage.

238 ANGLE ON: the Princess, who seems moved. 238

KATARA (CONT'D)
Gran Gran wouldn't let your tribe's stupid customs run her life. That's why she left. It must have taken a lot of courage.

Sokka watches as Princess Yue, visibly upset, runs off. Aang turns to Sokka.

AANG
Go get her.

Sokka runs off after Princess Yue.

EXT. CANALS - MOMENTS LATER

Yue stands alone on the bridge. Sokka runs up.

PRINCESS YUE
What do you want from me?

SOKKA
Nothing. I just want you to know I think you're beautiful, and I never thought a girl like you would even notice a guy like me.

PRINCESS YUE
You don’t understand...

SOKKA
No, no, see that’s the thing -- I think I do understand now. You’re a princess and I’m... I’m just a Southern peasant.

PRINCESS YUE
No, Sokka --

SOKKA
It’s okay. You don’t have to say anything. I’ll see you around, okay?

Sokka turns to leave, but Yue grabs his arm, pulls him back to her, and kisses him -- a real kiss, not some lame Suki-style kiss.

SOKKA (CONT’D)
Okay, now I’m really confused. Happy -- but confused.

PRINCESS YUE
I do like you. A lot. But we can’t be together -- and not for the reason you think. It’s because... I’m engaged.

Princess Yue shows Sokka her betrothal necklace which has been covered up by her coat up until this point.

PRINCESS YUE (CONT’D)
I’m sorry.

She runs off, leaving Sokka alone on the bridge, heartbroken.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TRAINING FIELD - THE NEXT MORNING

Aang and some other male students train with Pakku. Aang completes a difficult Waterbending move.

MASTER PAKKU
Not bad, not bad. (LAUGHS) Keep practicing and maybe you'll get it by the time you're my age.

Aang looks annoyed. Katara arrives.

AANG
Hey, Katara!

MASTER PAKKU
What do you think you're doing?
(beat)
It's past sunrise -- you're late!

Aang and Katara smile at each other as they take their Waterbending stances.

AANG
Good to see you here.

KATARA
You too.

EXT. ZHAO'S SHIP - MORNING

Zhao stands on the bridge with Uncle, looking out to sea.

ADMIRAL ZHAO
My fleet is ready. Set a course for the Northern Water Tribe.

EXT. SHORELINE - CONTINUOUS

The camera starts on Zhao's ship, then pulls out to reveal his huge fleet -- dozens of ships stretch down the shoreline, all on course to destroy the Northern Water Tribe.

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW